

# The Delray Democrat

June 2025 (# 80)

## Let's Make Progress *Senator Lori Berman*

I rise with deep gratitude, a strong sense of responsibility, and profound hope. It is the greatest honor of my professional life to stand before you as the newly elected Leader of the Florida Senate Democratic Caucus. I thank my colleagues for their trust, and I appreciate the people of Palm Beach County for the incredible privilege of representing them in this chamber.

Let me begin with this: Florida stands at a crossroads. This moment demands clarity and courage. Yes, we face serious challenges, from a changing climate to rising costs, but within every challenge lies a chance to lead with purpose and heart. And this session has shown us what's possible when we choose progress over partisanship.

This session in Tallahassee, we are standing firm against bills that would roll back child labor protection. We are fighting against efforts to ban books and censor ideas in our schools. We oppose efforts to roll back the important gun safety measures passed in a bipartisan manner in the wake of the horrific Parkland school shooting. We must honor the memories of those we lost by continuing to prioritize public safety, not by moving backward.

Floridians are watching. They are watching this chamber not for theatrics or soundbites, but for leadership. Leadership that puts people first. Leadership that rises above the noise and moves us toward a shared vision for our state's future.

We come from different parts of Florida. We hold diverse perspectives, life experiences, and political philosophies. But we were all elected for the same reason: because the people of this state entrusted us to do the work. The real work. Our diversity is our strength, and our unity is our power.

Our caucus is not just here to oppose; we are here to propose. To advance real solutions that address the needs of everyday Floridians. We will listen, legislate, and lead with empathy and resolve. My approach to leadership will not be one of division. It will be one of inclusion.

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## Juneteenth 2025

*Michael K. Cantwell*

President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, with an effective date of January 1, 1863. Enslaved Texans would not learn of their liberation for nearly two and a half more years, on June 19, 1865, when General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas.

His soldiers circulated through town reading an order informing the populace that henceforth there would exist "an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves." Now, 260 years later, descendants of the formerly enslaved are still waiting.

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*\*This is a transcript of the speech given by Senator Berman after she was elected Senate Democratic Leader. Congratulations, Lori! The speech was previously published in [The Palm Beach Post](#) and is reprinted here with permission.*

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We will not trade in fear. We will lead with facts. We will not engage in personal attacks. We will focus on policy. And we will not allow the loudest voices to drown out the needs of everyday Floridians.

To my colleagues across the aisle: I extend my hand in partnership. Some issues should never be partisan, such as ensuring our children's safety in school, protecting clean water, caring for our and growing our economy in a way that uplifts all

Floridians, not just the few at the top. Let's work together where we can. Let's disagree with respect where we must. And let's remember we were not elected to be comfortable. We were elected to be courageous.

To my fellow Democrats: I am proud to serve you, and I am prouder of what we are building. We are alive and kicking, passing bills, fighting bad policy and getting appropriations for projects that impact our districts. We may not hold the majority, but we have something just as powerful: a vision rooted in fairness, in justice, in equality, and in care.

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## President TACO

*Michael K. Cantwell*

“Trump Always Chickens Out.” **Take tariffs.** He's announced, delayed, doubled, and lowered them, and then delayed them again.

**Take Israel.** Benjamin Netanyahu had threatened to attack Iran for over a decade but had backed down when the U.S. president objected. According to [The New York Times](#), once Trump was told Netanyahu was going ahead, Trump chose to say nothing. Now the man who said only he could bring peace to the Middle East is saying he will decide in the next two weeks whether to join the attack. Netanyahu says he doesn't need Trump's help.

**Take Immigration.** Trump has apparently just learned that immigrants working in our fields and restaurants and hotels are hard to replace and his

immigration policy “might be alienating industries he wanted to keep on his side,” according to [The Times](#). So he's backing off on that: “Our great Farmers and people in the Hotel and Leisure business have been stating that our very aggressive policy on immigration is taking very good, long time workers away from them, with those jobs being almost impossible to replace,”

I'm surprised that he didn't add, “Not a lot of people know that,” his standard line whenever he learns something that most people already DO know.

And what he's been told about immigrants working in agriculture and hospitality is true of ALL immigrants. The only people who don't know that are the world-class haters.



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### **The Unrealized Promise of “Absolute Equality”**

Since 1865, there have been brief periods when absolute equality seemed to be on the horizon, only to be brutally squashed.

The first such period was the Reconstruction Era that followed ratification of the Civil War Amendments: the Thirteenth Amendment formally ended slavery; the Fourteenth Amendment granted citizenship rights and equal protection of the law to anyone born in the United States (that’s the one that Donald Trump says doesn’t say what it says); and the Fifteenth Amendment prohibited the states from denying or abridging the right of US citizens to vote “based on race, color, or past servitude.”

*“Juneteenth has never been a celebration of victory, or an acceptance of the way things are. Instead, it’s a celebration of progress. It’s an affirmation that despite the most painful parts of our history, things do get better. America can change.” Barack Obama, 44th President of the United States.*

Formerly enslaved people were elected to local, state, and national offices. At one point, 15% of the office holders in the South were Black, a higher percentage than in 1990. The backlash was swift and sustained, launching a century of terrorism and oppression.

Paramilitary groups of heavily armed Civil War veterans attacked Republican officeholders and suppressed the Black vote through violence and intimidation. Democrats ran nakedly racist races, winning elections by framing the choice as between “white supremacy” or “Negro rule.”

After federal troops left the South, the losers of the Civil War regained control of their legislatures. They passed a series of “Jim Crow” laws that enforced segregation and amended their Constitutions to “legally” disenfranchise Blacks.

And they rebranded, creating and perpetuating the lie that the Civil War was about “States’ Rights.” The only “States’ Right” at issue was the right to own another and persecute another human being,

In 1896, in one of the most shameful decisions in its history, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of segregation, provided that the separate facilities were “equal” in quality. Anyone with eyes could see they not.

It took over 60 years for the Court to rule that “separate but equal” is unconstitutional as applied to education. Even then, *Brown v. Board of Education* did not explicitly overrule *Plessy*, as it ignored segregation in other contexts.

And *Brown* had only limited impact on school segregation because towns across the South created inexpensive private schools to keep Whites from having to attend integrated schools. According to a 2020 [study](#) by the National Center for Education Statistics’ National Assessment of Educational Progress, Black children are “five times as likely as white children to attend schools that are highly segregated by race and ethnicity” and more than twice as likely to attend “high-poverty schools.”

It was another decade before Congress dismantled de jure segregation by passing the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. De facto segregation is still alive and sick.

Reaction to these laws led directly to Nixon’s election, Reagan Democrats, Northern racism (exposed only when integration threatened their de facto segregation).

### **Barack Obama**

The final era of dashed hopes began with the election of Barack Obama and the ludicrous claim that we had become a “colorblind” society. What actually happened was that the election unleashed an unapologetic racism not expressed since the heyday of Bull Connor and George Wallace.

President Obama may have been right when he said “things do get better,” but that was before things became a whole lot worse as Donald Trump was elected (and re-elected!).

So we celebrate Juneteenth with the same mixture of jubilation and solemnity that attended the earliest celebration. We will know that we have arrived at “absolute equality” only when, as Bob Marley sang, “The color of a man’s skin is of no greater significance than the color of his eyes.”

# When Will We Ever Learn?

*Michael K. Cantwell*

“If you don’t vote, you don’t count.” Vernon Dahmer Sr., president of the Mississippi NAACP, murdered by the Ku Klux Klan on January 10, 1968

I was too young to vote in 1968 but I fear I might have been foolish enough to stay home in any case. Nixon was a dog-whistle racist and Wallace was a flat-out racist and Humphrey was the lead author of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and had been a liberal icon for decades. What would seem to have been a simple choice was muddled by Humphrey’s support of the Vietnam conflict when he became Johnson’s Vice President.

I turned 21 in 1972, and never have I been more certain of my vote than when I cast my ballot for George McGovern, the most decent and progressive candidate nominated for the presidency in my lifetime.

In 1980, however, I was equally certain, this time that Jimmy Carter was too conservative to earn my vote, so I wasted it by voting for the fourth-party candidate, environmentalist Barry Commoner, helping in a small way to elect Ronald Reagan.

I learned. In 2000, I voted for Al Gore, even though my politics were far more closely aligned with Ralph Nader. I was living in New York, so I had a “free vote” – a vote for Nader would not have prevented Gore from winning the state, but I was furious that Nader stayed in the race even after it became clear it would be a nail-biter.

There are many reasons Trump won in 2016 and 2024 (not the least of which was sexism, which is as American as apple pie), but a big one was the fact that many Democrats did not understand that [there is no such thing as not voting](#). “You either vote by voting, or you vote by staying home and tacitly doubling the value of some Diehard’s vote,” as [David Foster Wallace](#) explained.

Here’s the fallout from the losses in 1968, 1980, 2000, 2016, and 2024. And remember, that with the exception of 1980, these were extremely close races.

Despite being in office only six years before he resigned in disgrace, Richard Nixon appointed four Supreme Court justices and Gerald Ford, appointed to serve out the remainder of Nixon’s second terms, successor appointed one more. This flipped the liberal Warren Court (many of whose justices had been appointed by Dwight Eisenhower, at a time when Republican presidents made appointments base of competence rather than politics).

Ronald Reagan appointed three more Supreme Court justices, each of whom voted to stop counting votes in Florida in 2000, effectively selecting George W. Bush as president in a nakedly partisan decision that is among the most reviled in Supreme Court history. Bush in turn appointed John Roberts, who wrote the decision gutting the Civil Rights Act, and Samuel Alito, who wrote the decision reversing *Roe*. Imagine if Al Gore had not been prevented from filling the open seats.

Trump’s three appointees provided a majority for the opinion on executive privilege that elected Donald Trump a second time.

All told, since 1968, Republicans have appointed 15 of the last 20 Supreme Court justices, while Democrats have appointed only five (two by Clinton, two by Obama, and one by Biden).

Let us hope that the Democrats who stayed home in 2024 have learned something, and let us further hope that we continue to have elections in which they can put those lessons to use.

***The Delray Democrat* is published monthly by the Democratic Club of Delray Beach.** The views and opinions expressed in the articles herein are their authors’ and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach or the Democratic Party, nor is this publication authorized by any candidate or candidate’s committee. The copyrights are owned by the respective authors but the articles may be copied and redistributed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license](#).

Editorial Board: Michael K. Cantwell (Editor), Char Lane (Managing Editor), David Kulick, and June Neal.



## Talking Points

Michael K. Cantwell

Kevin Cooper, chair of the Miami-Dade Republican Party recently ventured north to publish a taunting op-ed in [The Sun Sentinel](#). He claims that Republicans flipped Miami-Dade and intimates they'll flip Palm Beach because:

Our message is simple, and it's working. People want safe communities, strong borders, a thriving economy, quality education and leaders who stand up to dictators and tyrants — not cut deals with them. They want freedom and accountability, not government overreach and excuses.

This is another masterpiece of Republican messaging. It pushes all the emotional buttons while standing the facts on their heads. It talks the talk while Democrats walk the walk. Let's unpack it and see how.

**Want safer communities? Vote Blue.** Both of Florida's Republican Senators voted against the bipartisan Gun Safety Bill, and only one Republican House Member voted in favor. Democrats are protecting your community. Republican are protecting gun manufacturers.

**Want stronger borders? Vote Blue.** Republican Senators overwhelmingly supported the bipartisan immigration bill written by very conservative

Republican James Lankford, which would have strengthened border security and closed the door on citizenship for undocumented immigrants . . . until Donald Trump told them to vote against it in order to preserve a campaign issue. All but four Republicans obeyed.

**Want a “thriving economy”? Vote Blue.** The last four Democratic presidents created more than three times as many jobs as the last four Republicans in the same number of months. The economy has performed far better under virtually every economic indicator when a Democrat is in the White House. Even Donald Trump once admitted as much.

**Want quality education? Vote Blue.** Republican politicians in Tallahassee are dictating what teachers must teach. That's not just “government overreach.” It's what totalitarian regimes do.

**Want leaders who stand up to dictators and tyrants? Vote Blue.** Republicans look the other way when Trump cozies up to Vladimir Putin, Kim Jong Un, and Mohammed bin Salman.

And they shrug their shoulders every time Trump flouts the Constitution, threatens judges, and abrogates the independence of the Department of Justice.

### Worth Quoting

As the summer heats up and with US democracy increasingly at risk, two fundamental truths must remain front and center: people have a First Amendment right to protest, and US soldiers have an obligation to disobey unlawful orders. Amy Goodman and Denis Moynihan, [No Kings, No Caesar: Trump, Deploying the Military to Suppress Dissent, Crosses the Rubicon](#)

It's a moral crime that anybody working full time in America must depend on the largess of government or philanthropy to live a decent life: a minimum wage should provide for a minimum standard of living, not a poverty-filled struggle. Thom Hartman, [Why Do America's Workers Need Welfare? The Scandal Nobody Talks About](#)

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We're also always looking for writers (remember, you don't have to live in Delray Beach to read or write for *The Delray Democrat*. Send submissions to [editor@thedelraydemocrat.com](mailto:editor@thedelraydemocrat.com).

## Renew Your Vote by Mail Ballot Request

Republicans know that Democrats register to vote by mail in higher numbers than Republican.

They also know people who have registered to vote by mail vote in higher percentages than those who haven't registered to vote by mail.

That's why they eliminated the "check box" that allowed voters to automatically extend their vote by mail registration through the following election.

Now you must re-enroll after every general election. It's easy, and here's how to do it:

Scan the QR code and follow directions.



Phone: (561) 656-6208

Fax: (561) 656-6230

Go to [www.voteplambeach.gov](http://www.voteplambeach.gov) Scan this QR code and follow directions.

## No Kings, June 14, 2025

*Photos by Char Lane*



### Democratic Club of Delray Beach Officers and Directors

Michael Cantwell, President; Char Lane, Vice-President; Mary Fader, Secretary; David Kulick, Treasurer; Robert Averack, Parliamentarian; June Neal, and Martie Wrock, Directors; and John Ramos, Director Emeritus.

# **A Century of Republican Incompetence and Racism Versus Democratic Competence and Inclusion**

*Michael K. Cantwell*

## **Republicans Cause the Great Depression Democrats Create the Safety Net**

1923-1932: Republicans control Congress and the White House as the country careens into the Great Depression. The government does nothing to alleviate suffering as unemployment reaches 25% and millions become homeless.

1933-1944: FDR's "New Deal" for America includes a massive public works program, a "safety net" for desperate Americans, and regulation of the economic titans who caused the Great Depression. In his final State of the Union FDR proposes a Second Bill of Rights:

We cannot be content, no matter how high that general standard of living may be, if some fraction of our people—whether it be one-third or one-fifth or one-tenth—is ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, and insecure.

The dream dies with FDR two months later.

## **Democrats Expand the Safety Net Republicans Resort to Red-Baiting and Racism**

**1964:** Democrats pass Medicare and Medicaid. Shilling for the AMA, Ronald Reagan calls it socialized medicine and warns that if Medicare passes, "you and I are going to spend our sunset years telling our children, and our children's children, what it once was like in America when men were free."

**1964-1965:** Democrats pass the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. LBJ warns "we have lost the South for a generation." It is a gross underestimate.

**1968:** Richard Nixon launches his "Southern Strategy," using racist dog whistles to capture the presidency.

**1981-1992:** With an appeal to "States Rights," Reagan opens his campaign in the Mississippi county where the Klan murdered Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney. His presidency is marked by racist tropes ("welfare queens driving Cadillacs" and "strapping young bucks buying T-bone steaks with Food Stamps"). George H.W. Bush follows suit with Willie Horton. The Solid South flips, the Raw Deal replaces the New Deal, and the federal debt quadruples.

**1993-2001:** Bill Clinton creates 23 million jobs during his tenure. The annual budget shows a surplus for his last three years in office. The Supreme Court stops the vote count and hands the presidency to George W. Bush. Al Gore concedes rather than foment an insurrection.

## **Republicans Continue Creating Messes Democrats Continue Fixing Them**

**2001-2008:** George W. Bush ignores CIA warnings regarding Osama bin Laden, leading to 9/11. He invades Afghanistan and corners but then loses bin Laden in the mountains. He launches a \$3-trillion war against Iraq based on lies and in violation of international law. He spies on Americans unlawfully. He doubles the federal debt.

Bush signs tax cuts benefitting the wealthiest Americans. He tries but fails to privatize Social Security. He bungles the response to Katrina. He lets banksters run wild and they cause the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Four million Americans lose their jobs and 10 million (disproportionately POC) lose their homes.

**2009-2016:** The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 prevents a second Great Depression and Obama adds a net of 11 million jobs. Democrats pass the Affordable Care Act, insuring 20 million previously uninsured Americans and saving tens of thousands of lives. Bin Laden is killed.

**2016-2020, Behold the Beast:** Dismissed as a joke by a craven, clueless corporate media, Donald Trump presides over the most ruinous presidency in American history. His single legislative achievement is a tax cut for plutocrats and multinationals. Inheriting the longest postwar expansion, he adds nearly as much debt in 4 years as Obama added in 8. His incompetent response to COVID exacerbates the death toll and plunges the country into a Second Great Depression. He loses 9.3 million jobs in his final year, becoming the first president to preside over a net job loss during his tenure.

**2021-24, A Consequential Presidency:** Democrats pass the American Recovery Plan and Inflation Reduction Act without any Republican votes. Biden signs the largest infrastructure bill in decades, the first gun safety legislation in nearly three decades, the biggest expansion of veterans' benefits in over three decades, and an investment in microchip production to make America more competitive with China.

Biden adds over 16 million jobs (more than any president in a single term) and unemployment flirts with its lowest rate in 54 years, tames the COVID-created inflation, and turns over a strong economy to Donald Trump

**2025-?:** Trump begins to make good on his second chance to destroy the economy and his first real chance to destroy the Republic.



## 2025 Membership

*Char Lane*

The most consequential General Election of our lifetimes is over and now is time to be resilient and work hard to help keep our democracy intact.

It's time to renew our DCDB 2025 memberships. Our membership is on a calendar year basis and your dues help provide funding for operational projects, such as *The Delray Democrat*, our meetings, other operational supplies, and signage for our sign waving events. Meetings are at 7 PM on the third Thursday of each month and held at the PBC DEC Office at 220 Congress Park Drive. Meeting notices are sent out in the weeks prior to meetings and include Zoom links to register for and/or join the hybrid meetings and links to our various websites.

Our goal is to educate people as to the importance of voting, why they should vote Democratic and why they should use Vote-by-Mail as a critical tool in support of this goal. **Please remember to reenroll in the Vote-by-Mail Program for 2025-2026 online at [votepalmbeach.gov](http://votepalmbeach.gov) and selecting the Vote-by-Mail tab or calling 561.656.6208 or visiting any of the SoE offices.**

Getting out the vote is our most important mission. You can help by making phone calls, texting, writing postcards, canvassing, or becoming a precinct leader.

You can register people to vote and help people sign up or reenroll to vote by mail. You can volunteer for projects to benefit the community. The 2026 Mid-term Elections are less than two years away and we have so much work to do.

If you're already a Club member, please renew your membership for 2025. If you are not a member, not, please consider joining.

To become a member of the DCDB: complete and mail the Membership application or click on the QR code below. You can also give me your membership application/renewal at our meetings.



Visit us at [www.demclubofdelray.org](http://www.demclubofdelray.org). Read *The Delray Democrat* at [www.thedelraydemocrat.com](http://www.thedelraydemocrat.com). Join us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/992741928168620>.

### Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2025 Membership Application and Renewal

Date \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Name/names of household members \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

(E-mail addresses are shared with the Palm Beach County Democratic Party so our members will be kept abreast of the latest County Democratic Activity. If you do not wish to receive this information, please initial here \_\_\_\_\_ and we will not share your E-mail address.)

Preferred method of contact: E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Text \_\_\_\_\_

Send newsletter by: E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Hand delivery \_\_\_\_\_ U.S. Mail \_\_\_\_\_

I/we are in South Florida from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ each year or are a permanent resident \_\_\_\_\_.

Payment: Individual \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Household \$35 \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Democratic Club of Delray Beach and mail to P.O. Box 8224, Delray Beach, FL 33484. Thank you and welcome to our Club.

